

REMARKS

In view of the herein contained remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging that Applicants timely traversed the restriction requirement. Applicants note that claims 9-13 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Additionally, Applicants would like to respectfully thank the Examiner for acknowledging their claim of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and for her indication that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by WANG (U.S. Patent No. 6,219,168). The Examiner further rejected claims 1-3, 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SWANSON et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,191,862) in view of WANG. Also, the Examiner rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SWANSON et al. in view of WANG and further in view of FERCHER et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,057,920). Lastly, the Examiner rejected claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SWANSON et al. in view of WANG and further in view of TAKEHATA et al. (JP 7-155291).

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.55 (a)(4), Applicants have submitted herewith a certified translation of their priority document, Japanese Application No. 11-225974 filed August 10, 1999. A certified copy of the aforementioned priority document has already been filed in the instant application in accordance with 35 U.S.C. § 119, the receipt of which has been acknowledged by the Examiner in the outstanding Official Action. By submitting the certified translation, and thus perfecting priority, Applicants antedate the effective date of WANG of December 20, 1999 and thus render it unusable as a reference. Notwithstanding, Applicants do not concede that in the absence of the antedating of the WANG reference, WANG would preclude patentability of the claimed subject matter.

With regard to SWANSON, FERCHER et al., and TAKEHATA et al., Applicants note that each of these references have been applied by the Examiner only in combination with WANG due to each of their own shortcomings. Therefore, since WANG has been antedated, and thus removed from applicability as a reference, each of these documents remain deficient, and even in combination, they fail to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

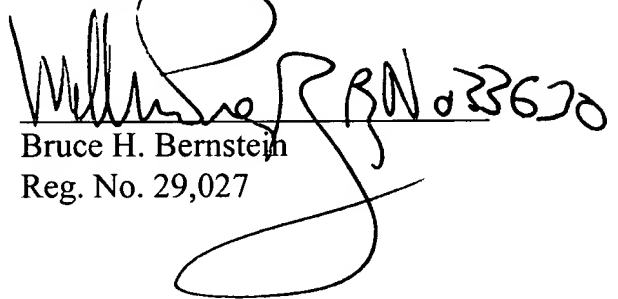
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that they have now done so.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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